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| **What’s a comparative essay?**  A comparative essay is a written response that compares the similarities and differences of 2 specific historical content pieces. It also **analyzes** and provides insight into why similarities and differences in historical content exist. |

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| **How do I write a comparative essay? What are the steps to follow?**   1. Start by brainstorming; collect your ***evidence*** on a particular historical subject. 2. Decide on key similarity or difference ***categories*** that exist within your collected evidence, i.e. how can you group your evidence? 3. Draft a ***thesis*** based on the evidence and categories that you have.   **-**A ***thesis*** states an opinion or argument about your evidence.  **-**In a comparative essay a thesis also addresses both similarity and difference.  **-**A thesis also uses the argument categories you came up with to illustrate ***how*** you intend to support your opinion or argument.   1. Outline the Introduction Paragraph (aka the Thesis Paragraph)   -Background info  -Thesis sentence.  -Rest of thesis paragraph (aka “The Forecast” of your essay)   1. Outline the body of your comparative essay (paragraphs 2,3,& 4)   -Plan out the topic sentence of each body paragraph (forecasted category)  -Plan out the evidence and analysis sentence for the sim/diff in that paragraph.   1. Outline the conclusion of your comparative essay   -Restate/summarize your thesis statement in 2 sentences max. |

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| **Ok I think I understand, let’s begin…** |

*Write down the prompt you’ve been given to write about.*

**Prompt**:

**Stop and think!** *What’s the question asking you to do? Where is the topic situated? When is the question, i.e. what time period are you writing about?*

**What?**

**Where?**

**When?**

*Check that out! The what, where and when has given you some background info to start your thesis paragraph. Pretty cool right?Now here is where it gets exciting. Take a second look at your prompt; choose 2 specific topics from those provided. These will become what you write your essay about. You will compare and analyze these topics in your essay. By filling out the chart below you are writing out your collected evidence, organizing it into categories of similarity and difference, and finally giving some initial thoughts on analyzing the similarity and differences, i.e. explaining WHY the similarities and differences exist!*

***Are you excited yet?*** *You should be! Your essay is starting to come together.*

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| **Characteristics of Topic #1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **Characteristics of Topic #2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| 1.  2.  3.  4.  5. | 1.  2.  3.  4.  5. |
| **Key Similarities (Categories)** | |
| 1.  2.  3. | |
| **Key Differences (Categories)** | |
| 1.  2.  3. | |
| **Reason(s) for Similarities/Differences (Analysis)** | |
| 1.  2.  3. | |

*Ok! Nice job on the last page, but here’s the tough part:* ***planning out your thesis statement*** *(aka the intro paragraph). Not to put too much pressure on you, but the* ***thesis*** *is maybe the most important part of your essay. As you work through this next set of scaffold questions think about:*

1. *What are your “rule of 3” main points/arguments?*
2. *Do your “rule of 3” arguments relate to the “what” of the given prompt?*
3. *Can you support that main point/argument with the specific evidence you brainstormed and collected earlier on page 2 of this packet?*

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| **Thesis Paragraph Practice** |

**Prompt:**

**What? Where? When?**

**Background Intro (1 sentence)**

*Demonstrate to the reader that you know the what, when and where of this prompt. If your are able, you might place your essay in a larger context of the historical content you’ve been studying in class.*

**Thesis Sentence (1 sentence)**

*Provide your “rule of 3” argument categories. To start, circle one of the following beginnings below*

While/Although/In spite of/Despite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Rest of Thesis Paragraph (aka “Forecast” of the rest of the essay)**

*You might include a brief outline/summary of how you will support your thesis. In other words, preview the topic sentence argument of each body paragraph to come. This is optional for WHAP essays.*

*Alright, the hardest part is over. Now you just need to plan out what you intend to write out in each of your body paragraphs. The body portion of your paper is where you will present evidence that describes similarities and differences. Each body paragraph will represent a different category. Remember the categories you included in your thesis sentence? This is why you have them. In each paragraph you will directly compare evidence and then once done comparing you will analyze the evidence, i.e. answer WHY the similarities or differences exist!*

*This format I’ve just described is called “The Split” method, here’s a rough idea of what it looks like:*

**Sample Essay Outline for “THE SPLIT” Method:**

Intro/Thesis – Argument order: political, economic, social

Body Paragraph 1—political (similarities and differences + analysis)

Body Paragraph 2—economic (similarities and differences + analysis)

Body Paragraph 3—social (similarities and differences +analysis)

Conclusion/Thesis Restated – Argument summary order: political, economic, social

**Sample Body Paragraph Outline for “THE SPLIT” Method:**

1. **Argumentative Topic Sentence** – State your argument (sim/diff for the paragraph) in the first sentence.
2. **Discussion of Topic #1** (e.g. The Collapse of the Roman Empire)
   1. Your discussion relates Topic #1 to your sim/diff argument.
   2. Support your argument about Topic #1 by including **Specific Historical Evidence (S.H.E.)**
3. **Transition using a Power Word** – a power word is a transitional word or phrase that that indicates to the reader that you are changing subjects.
   1. *Similarly, likewise, in contrast, on the other hand, however, etc.*
4. **Discussion of Topic #2** (e.g. The Collapse of the Han Dynasty)
   1. Your discussion relates Topic #2 to your sim/diff argument.
   2. Support your argument about Topic #2 by including **Specific Historical Evidence (S.H.E.)**
5. **Analyze the** **Direct Comparison** – Why does this sim/diff exist?
   1. \*Note – a ***direct comparison*** is when you are comparing the same type of historical content (e.g. comparing ***the collapse of two classical civilizations*** like Imperial Rome and the Han Dynasty)

**Now Plan Out the Content of Your Body Paragraphs!**

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| **Body Paragraph #1 – Category: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Topic Sentence (stated as an argument):**  **Potential SIM/DIFF Transitional Power Word to Use: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **List of 3-4 Specific Historical Evidence (S.H.E.) pieces to include and explain:**  **Analysis (answers ‘why?’ the sim/diff exists):** |

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| **Body Paragraph #1 – Category: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Topic Sentence (stated as an argument):**  **Potential SIM/DIFF Transitional Power Word to Use: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **List of 3-4 Specific Historical Evidence (S.H.E.) pieces to include and explain:**  **Analysis (answers ‘why?’ the sim/diff exists):** |

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| **Body Paragraph #1 – Category: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Topic Sentence (stated as an argument):**  **Potential SIM/DIFF Transitional “Power Word” to Use: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **List of 3-4 Specific Historical Evidence (S.H.E.) pieces to include and explain:**  **Analysis (answers ‘why?’ the sim/diff exists):** |

*Well, you are ALMOST at the end! The conclusion is all that’s left. A lot of time students think, “What do I write in my conclusion?” The best way to go about concluding your essay is to leave your reader with a sense of your main points. Readers enjoy being left with a strong and clear finish. There should be a direct connection between your introduction and conclusion paragraphs. How do you do that? Simple, summarize and restate your thesis point. Go back to page 3 if you forgot what you put into your original thesis paragraph. Sometimes when we restate our thesis sentence it pushes us to be more eloquent or clear in how we state our original thesis.* ***Here’s an important tip: when you summarize and restate your thesis****,* ***make sure you do so in no more than 2 sentences.***

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| **Conclusion Paragraph Practice** |

**Prompt:**

**What? Where? When?**

**Background Context Reminder**

*Briefly remind your reader of the context in which your analysis takes place. Refresh that you know the how, when and where of this topic and the relation to the history you’ve been studying.*

**Restate/Summarize Your Thesis Sentence**

DO NOT REPEAT YOUR THESIS FROM THE INTRO **WORD-FOR-WORD**. SUMMARIZE!

*Circle one of the following beginnings below*

While/Although/In spite of/ Despite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Congrats you have successfully planned out your comparative essay. Now you can write it out! Good Luck!***